

SECRET

R. Lehman
7 August 1975

The Role of the DCI

1. In any discussion of the organization and management of the Community, the DCI--what he is, what he does, what he is supposed to do--is the central issue. This paper focusses on the DCI's general responsibilities and powers as an introduction to the more detailed papers that follow.

Statutory Background

2. The National Security Act in essence sets up the DCI primarily to produce national intelligence and secondarily to conduct covert action. It implicitly makes him the leader of something that has come to be called the "Intelligence Community". It does not, however, specify his functions (beyond "correlate and evaluate") nor does it provide him with specific authorities over the agencies that make up the Community.

3. The President's letter of November 1971 made explicit some of the responsibilities that were only implicit in the Act. In so doing it increased the DCI's responsibilities without increasing his powers. He was directed to:

SECRET

SECRET

- Prepare and advise the President on a consolidated intelligence budget, and advise on the allocation of intelligence resources;
- Produce "national intelligence";
- Chair and staff all Community boards and committees, which were now only to be advisory to him.

Definitions

4. On the rather frail skeleton provided by these two documents* there has grown by accretion a congeries of bureaucratic mechanisms, doctrines, and the equivalent of common law that centers on and depends on the institution that we call the DCI. To understand it, one must first define some terms. First, what is the national intelligence that the DCI is supposed to produce? Second, what are the functions he must carry out to produce it? Third, what is the Community he is supposed to lead? Fourth, what management tools are available to him as leader?

* Much of the following discussion is in terms of formal responsibilities and authorities. It should be recognized, however, that the effectiveness of each DCI has been directly proportional to the confidence placed in him by the President and Congress and the belief of his colleagues in the Community that he had that confidence.

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

a. National Intelligence is here defined simply as that foreign intelligence needed by the senior levels of government, including the economic, to do their job in making and implementing policy. (NSCID #1 defines it as intelligence that transcends the concern of any single department or agency and that is fully coordinated among all of them; while this remains on the books for bureaucratic reasons, it is no longer a particularly useful concept).

b. For the purpose of this paper five functions related to the production of national intelligence are postulated: collection, processing, analysis,* R&D, and support. Of these collection and analysis are primary, and the appropriate slices of processing, R&D, and support can be allocated between them. Action is a function assigned to the DCI that cannot be directly related to the production of national intelligence, although it is thoroughly tangled up with the collection aspect.

* By "analysis" here is meant the process of transforming raw data into the finished intelligence that is delivered to the consumer. This process is often called "production", and it is in this narrower sense that the word "production" is used elsewhere in these papers.

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

c. "The Community" is usually thought of as the membership of USIB, but we have suggested above that this question is more complicated. There could be said to be four communities, each with a few primary members and several peripheral ones. These are the communities of collectors, of producers, of consumers, and of resource managers. The membership and structure--if any--of each community is different. (While the membership of the 40 Committee could be considered a fifth, or "action" community, it would be more accurate to describe the DCI's action function as one carried out through a chain of command from the President to the Assistant for National Security Affairs to the DCI.)

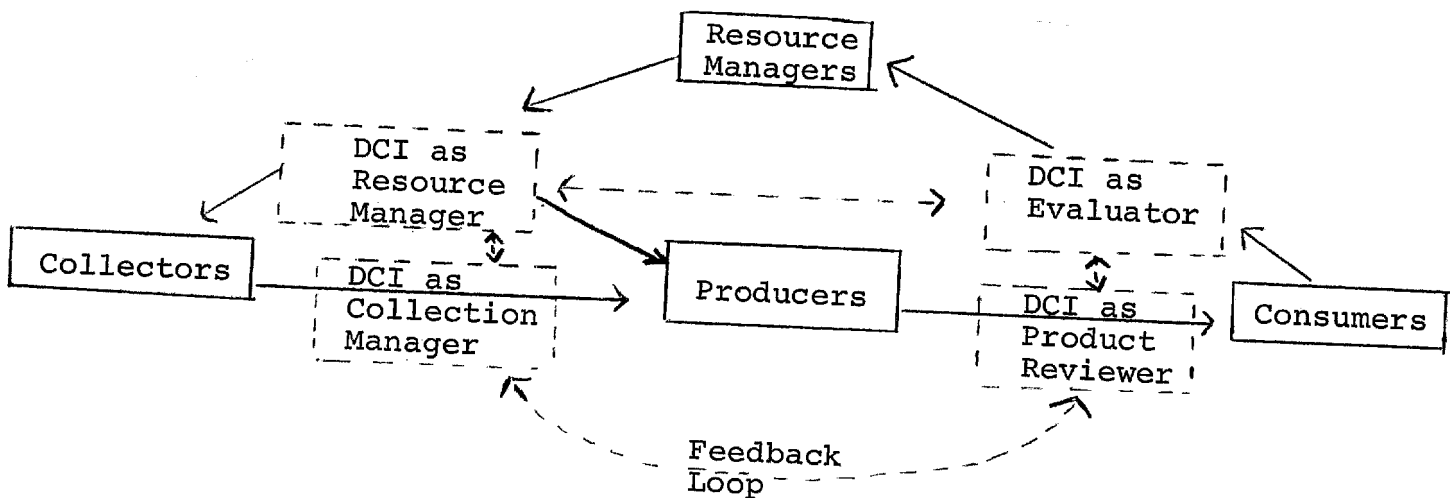
d. Management tools or controls can be direct or indirect. Direct control of course means line authority. For intelligence, we have identified four possible instruments by which authority can be exercised indirectly: the management of resources, including manpower, money, and--peculiar to intelligence--cover; collection management, by which we mean the allocation of collection resources to substantive problems, tasking and requirements,

SECRET

SECRET

The continuing review and assessment of collection results; and the establishment of requirements for new systems; product review, which includes both the final shaping of the intelligence product to match the needs of the national consumer and a continuing evaluation of the product against those needs; and inspection. Note that all of these except inspection are interdependent and operate at the interfaces between the various communities.

Thus:



Great Responsibilities

5. It is apparent that the DCI is a member in some sense of all the communities. It is also apparent that he wears three hats--as Presidential adviser, as head of "the Community" (Chairman of USIB, IRAC, and EXCOM),

SECRET

SECRET

and as Director of CIA--but his hats by no means correspond fully with the four functional communities. Moreover, he has responsibilities to the Congress that represent another complicating factor. (While the DCI's Congressional responsibilities are discussed elsewhere, they are introduced here because they are closely related to his Executive roles).

a. The DCI as Presidential adviser. In this capacity he is the primary source of national intelligence for the President and the NSC. He personally advises the President and the NSC on all intelligence matters, including budget, and serves on the various NSC sub-Committees. (It is on his access to the President in these capacities that his ability to carry out his other functions in practice depends.) If the President wishes, the DCI can also advise on broader foreign policy matters. He has no Congressional responsibilities.

b. The DCI as head of the Community. This DCI is the primary source of national intelligence for the federal government and is its senior intelligence adviser. He coordinates to varying degrees administrative and operational matters

SECRET

SECRET

that concern more than one agency. He advises OMB on the Community budget. For the Congress, he provides intelligence, defends the Community budget, and advises on all foreign intelligence matters.

c. The DCI as Director of CIA. As DCIA, the DCI is a line officer administering a large independent agency under the NSC. He is a producer of intelligence for the mechanisms over which he presides wearing his other two hats. Quite distinct from these roles, he has a specialized line function as the agent of the President, or the NSC, in the conduct of foreign policy through covert action and confidential communication with foreign governments. For the Congress, this DCI too is a source of foreign intelligence. It expects him to present and defend CIA's budget, and to account for its performance. He is required to inform the Congress of covert action programs; whether he will have to defend them is not yet established.

SECRET

SECRET

6. Schematically, the DCI's various roles and functions can be illustrated as follows:

	Executive	Congressional
As Presidential Adviser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provides national intelligence -Advises on intelligence -Can advise on foreign policy 	
As leader of Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Produces national intelligence----- -Advises on Community budget----- -Coordinates Community---- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides intelligence Defends Community budget Advises on intelligence
As Director of CIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Produces intelligence---- -Runs Agency----- -Carries out covert action programs----- -Acts as Presidential agent to foreign governments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides intelligence {Defends Agency Budget {Accounts for its activities Informs on (and defends? covert action programs

It should be noted that in several ways his Executive and Congressional roles do not match up.

Weak Authorities

7. The point has been made elsewhere that the Act of 1947 is inadequate for the management of national intelligence operations so complex and so expensive, and will be even less adequate for controlling the interaction of these systems in near-real time. Moreover,

SECRET

SECRET

existing machinery is so encrusted with the scars of old bureaucratic wars as to make it inflexible in meeting new challenges, and the DCI lacks the power to rationalize it. In terms of the management tools we have identified, he has direct or line authority only over those elements of the collection and production communities which are parts of CIA. His ability to use indirect management devices is at best limited.

a. In the resource field his nominal authority to advise, weak at best, is further weakened by DOD's control of 80 percent of the intelligence budget and by the DCI's inability to acquire information. (Even a DCI who is "the President's man" cannot stand up to a Secretary of Defense who enjoys the same status.)

b. In collection management, the DCI has no single mechanism cutting across systems. As head of the "the Community" he has a set of USIB Committees, developed ad hoc and operating independently, to administer individual systems. They range from COMIREX, which is elaborately developed and in which he has strong influence, to Human Sources, which is rudimentary and through which

SECRET

SECRET

his influence over Foreign Service reporting is almost nil. It should be noted also that important collection management decisions are often made outside even this structure, in IRAC, in EXCOM, between individual producers and collectors, or by individual system managers acting on their own.

c. The DCI's authority in product review is more fully established than in any other field, probably because it was so clearly the intent of the 1947 Act to give him this power. He exercises it through USIB's consideration of National Estimates, through the less formal procedures of current intelligence, and through his contribution to the NSC and its sub-Committees. On the other hand, there exist channels by which departmental views regularly bypass the national system, and he lacks the power to regulate this practice. Mechanisms for the evaluatory, or consumer response, aspect of product review are less structured and much less effective.

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

d. The DCI has never asserted, much less exercised, the right to inspect intelligence agencies other than CIA, although such a right is implicit to varying degrees in the basic statutes and directives.

e. While resource management, collection management, product review, and evaluation should be an integrated system, they are in fact fragmented.

Attempts to Reconcile

8. Faced with such a bewildering array of functions and organizations, each DCI has chosen to concentrate on a part of his responsibilities. Dulles saw himself primarily as the government's covert arm. McCone saw himself as Presidential adviser*, and found CIA a useful instrument for that purpose. Raborn never knew what he was. Helms concentrated on the Agency; under Johnson he functioned to some extent as adviser, but resisted asserting his authority over the Community. Schlesinger appeared in the short time he served to be putting the Community role first. Colby has sought to give equal weight to his Community and Agency responsibilities.

* Significantly, only McCone chose to do battle with Defense on resource matters, and even he was not notably successful.

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

More broadly, he has sought to bind both these responsibilities together, in their collection, production, and resource management aspects, through the NIO's and the KIQ-KEP system. Whether this device will be meaningful in the absence of true authority is yet to be demonstrated.

9. The Schlesinger study of 1970-71 attempted to redefine the role of the DCI with two stated objectives: saving money and improving the product. It suggested several altered structures for the Community, some quite radical, and analyzed them in terms of the bureaucratic equities involved. As noted above, the President's letter of November 1971 ultimately selected the least traumatic of these options, one that might be characterized as "status quo plus". The DCI was to go on wearing all three hats, and was to receive limited additional powers in the resource field. He was to have a larger staff for managing the Community, and devices were to be created by which the assessment of senior intelligence consumers could be brought to bear on the product.

10. Whether under Helms*, who quietly sought and received agreement from Stennis that he not tackle

* Helms clearly did not have the confidence of or access to President Nixon that would have been necessary to carry out the intent of the letter.

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

the most difficult aspects of the President's letter, or under Schlesinger, who set about to implement the plan he helped to write in a manner that set his newly formed Community staff in bitter opposition to his own CIA, or under Colby, who has been too involved in dealing with the external problems he inherited to confront the problem, the letter changed no power relationships and therefore solved nothing. And to the two objectives pursued by Schlesinger recent events have added two more: to build effective internal and external oversight and to develop a public confidence in its effectiveness that will permit intelligence to function.

Present Situation

11. If the DCI as manager of national intelligence was seen in 1971 as too weak to accomplish these objectives, he is even weaker relative to his problems of today:

--As Presidential adviser, he is physically and organizationally removed from the President he is supposed to advise. Moreover, the fact that he is head of a clandestine organization under political attack for "improprieties" forces the President to keep him at a distance.

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

The budgetary authority he has been given is only advisory and stands up badly against the weight of the DOD.

--His position as leader of the Community is meaningless in the absence of the stronger position that a closer Presidential relationship would give him. It is effective only within the USIB structure, where dissents are institutionalized. The lines linking him to, or defining his powers relative to, the three functional communities are tangled indeed.

--As Director of CIA he has line authority but has too many responsibilities beyond CIA to give it proper attention. (The structure of CIA itself is such that no DCI has yet found it possible to delegate in any meaningful way to his Deputy.) Moreover, the Schlesinger experience showed the impossible situation created when a DCI as head of the Community seeks to move in a direction antagonistic to his interests as DCIA.

SECRET

SECRET

That it is a truism makes it no less true that the present DCI has responsibility without commensurate authority.

12. If radical surgery could be at least contemplated in 1971, it can be the more so now. This paper in its subsequent sections will address particular organization and management problems. It will be most effective, however, if it does so against some understanding of the broader questions relating to the DCI as an institution that underlie these problems.

--Is a stronger DCI to have direct authority or indirect? In simplest terms, the former would make him a DNI, in the line of command over the collection and production communities. The latter would have him exert his authority over mechanisms linking the various communities.

--Can a DCI really manage national intelligence and still wear all three hats? If not, which shall he give up? The DNI would in effect combine all three. The other possibilities to be considered are a separate Presidential adviser and a separate DCIA.

--If there is more than one DCI, how should the present CIA be divided among them? Obviously

SECRET

SECRET

an effective DCI who does not run CIA must have a staff. What functions should it perform?

--Should the various communities be institutionalized to replace the present USIB? What role should the DCI or DCI's play here?

--Should there be an "action" capability? If so, should the DCI be responsible for it, and to whom should he report in that respect? If a separate DCIA is responsible, then should he report through a DCI responsible for national intelligence?

--In general, how to reconcile the strong DCI required for sensible management with a public opinion increasingly sensitized to the idea of powerful, secret intelligence organizations?

SECRET